

READERS **respond**

POLL RESULTS

Should Cell Phones Be Banned From Classrooms?

Results from our poll and reader comments suggest that many educators are divided on the issue of cell phone use in the classroom.

A Definite Maybe

Cell phones offer students and their parents security by allowing them to be in contact, should the student be in a dangerous situation. Cell phones are also handy in coordinating schedules. Is this enough to offset the disruption they can cause? Maybe.

*Shelley McCoy
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee*

Don't Ban Valuable Tools

It is funny that we have these conversations. Would a school ban paper, pencils, and notebooks? Then why ban another very valuable tool? Sure, it can be misused, but so can pencils and paper. Ever get a nasty note stuck in your locker? But compare it to what it would be like without paper and pencil. Productivity would be way down. Same thing with tech tools like cell phones.

*Scott S. Floyd
TCEA
White Oak, Texas*

Can You Hear Me—Later?

Please! As is the case for all technologies, there is a time and a place for utilization. Can you show me the instructional content that has been created to operate on the various cell phone platforms, and with measurable results? When you can, it will be time to use these in a classroom. Until then, engage the kids in meaningful study with proven technologies.

*John Laws
Lakota Local School District
Cincinnati, Ohio*

Handhelds Are Handy

Cell phones are feature-rich communications devices with Internet access, messaging, calculators, calendars, video/MP3 players, digital cameras, and other tools that place them one step below laptops, yet more portable and affordable. Ban them? We should help teachers find ways to integrate them into their daily classroom routines.

*Todd Sanford Harris
Copiague Public Schools
Copiague, New York*

What about Standards?

How can cell phones in classrooms move us closer to No Child Left Behind? Their ringing disrupts everyone, their photographic capabilities raise many privacy issues, and they enable new levels of cheating.

*Gary Hoyne
East Aurora High School
Aurora, Illinois*

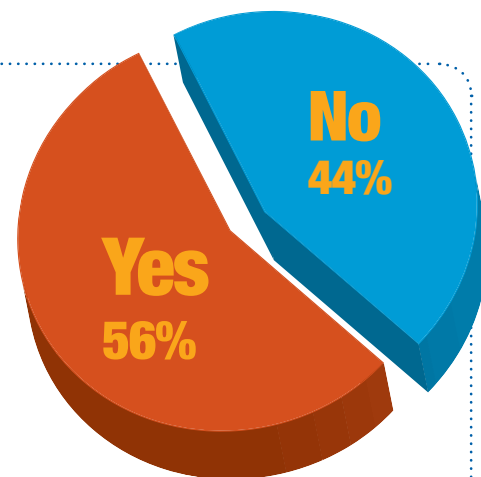
Teach Appropriate Use

With proper guidance, the cell phone may one day be the 1-to-1 device of choice. Parents provide the device, telecom companies provide the network, schools leverage the power of information, and the testing companies set them up to deliver NCLB-mandated testing!

*Douglas L. Tomhave
South St. Paul Public Schools
South St. Paul, Minnesota*

Don't Fear the Beeper

Schools ban cell phones out of fear and the lack of a vision of potential advantages. How much would that



change if all children could access interactive textbooks, instructional videos, educational simulations, collaborative communities, and an electronic library via their phones? We should teach students responsible use and take advantage of this powerful (and potentially free) tool for learning and collaboration.

*Karen Fasimpaur
Educational Consultant, K-12 Handhelds
Long Beach, California*

Raises Many Questions

Many schools teach students to use handhelds. How can schools then prevent students from using their own personal handhelds for learning activities in the classroom? Not all students will have the latest and greatest mini-computer technology. How do we deal with the disparities? It appears that it is a violation of state wire-tapping laws for school officials to review electronic records on a cell phone without permission. It is also far more difficult for teachers to restrict and monitor what students are doing with their personal technologies. How do we make sure students are using these devices safely and responsibly?

*Nancy Willard
Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
Eugene, Oregon*

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